

GERMANY DECLINES TO INITIATE PEACE

Von Bethmann-Hollweg Thinks It Folly to Make Proposals to Blindly-Led Enemies.

MAKES SPEECH IN REICHSTAG

Willing to Discuss Terms Compatible With Dignity and Safety of Nation.

BERLIN, December 9 (By wireless to Saville).—Germany is always ready to discuss peace proposals compatible with her dignity and safety, but the war can be terminated only by a peace which will give the victors that which they will not again return, declared the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, addressing the Reichstag to-day. The Chancellor made it clear that in his opinion it would be folly for Germany to propose peace "as long as in the countries of our enemies the guilt and ignorance of statesmen are entangled with confusion of public opinion."

Conscious of her military successes, the Chancellor said, Germany declines responsibility for a further continuation of the war. Germany, he declared, could not be charged with the purpose of fighting on to make further conquests.

He asserted Germany's food supplies were sufficient and that her immense stores of copper were adequate for any year.

After Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg had made his statement, all parties, except the Socialists, joined in a declaration approving the Chancellor's utterances and endorsing the view that in the conditions of peace made after the war there must be guarantees for Germany's safety, "even if this implies annexation of territory."

ADDRESS IN RESPONSE TO SOCIALIST INTERPELLATION

The address of Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, which has been awaited with extraordinary interest, was made in response to the socialist interpellation.

"Is the Imperial Chancellor ready to give information as to the conditions under which he would be willing to enter into peace negotiations?" In his reply, he said:

"As long as in the countries of our enemies the guilt and ignorance of statesmen are entangled with confusion of public opinion, it would be folly for Germany to make peace proposals, which would not shorten, but would lengthen the duration of the war. First, the masks must be torn from their faces."

"At present they speak of a war of annihilation against us. We have to take this fact into account. The correct arguments for peace or proposals of peace will not advance us, will not bring the end nearer."

"If our enemies make peace proposals compatible with Germany's dignity and safety, then we shall always be ready to discuss them. Fully conscious of our unshaken military successes, we decline responsibility for continuation of the misery which now fills Europe and the whole world. No one can say that we continue the war because we still desire to conquer this or that country as guarantee."

REMARKS CHERISHED WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM

In these words the Chancellor, with impassioned voice, stated the position of the German government on the question of peace. His remarks were cheered with great enthusiasm.

When Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg rose to reply to the interpellation, presented by Dr. Scheidemann, Socialist leader, silence fell over the whole house, but was soon broken by manifestations of approval. Several times the deputies and galleries interrupted him with cheer.

Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg began by saying that in the countries at war with Germany there had been much discussion of the socialist interpellation, and that the knowledge that peace was to be discussed in the Reichstag had been a source of satisfaction to these countries. This was incomprehensible in view of the success won in the campaign against Serbia, which opened the road to Germany's Turkish allies, and threatened the most vulnerable point of the British empire. Although this situation would explain a desire for peace on the part of Germany's enemies, he declared, none of them had made overtures. Instead, they were clinging to the intentions which they had announced publicly "with naive brutality" at the beginning of the war.

The Chancellor then reviewed recent utterances concerning conditions of peace made in countries opposed to Germany, such as the handing over of Alsace and Lorraine to France, the annihilation of "Prussian militarism," the expulsion of the Turks, cession of the left bank of the Rhine, and the

creation of a greater Serbia, including Vienna.

It was true, the Chancellor continued, that there were some persons in the countries at war with Germany who took a sensible position, but they were in the minority, and their voices, like those of certain members of the English House of Lords, were unheard.

THEORIES ADVANCED BY ENEMIES HAVE LOST THEIR FORCE

The theories advanced by Germany's enemies, he said, had lost their force. "People had ceased speaking of a war of twenty years. The pretext that the war was being waged for the protection of small nations had lost its persuasive power, in view of recent events in Greece."

"Small countries are in a serious plight, since England has been fighting for them," he remarked.

He discussed the principle of nationality as applied by Germany's enemies. He asked whether the British Colonial Secretary knew that, of the 1,000,000 inhabitants of Alsace, more than 87 per cent spoke German as the mother tongue. He asked whether Poland belonged to Russia by right of nationality, whether this principle lost its power and value if applied to India or Egypt. Germany's enemies, blinded at the beginning of war by false stories, excited by hatred, were now able, after military and diplomatic defeats, to cling only to the idea of Germany's annihilation.

For this purpose there had been invented the theory that Germany could be starved. On this point the Chancellor said, with particular emphasis:

"We all agree that our food supplies are sufficient, that the only important question is distribution. The economic unit stretching from Arras into Mesopotamia cannot be crushed."

As to copper, the Chancellor declared, Germany had immense stores, sufficient for years and years. He spoke of Germany's success in producing substitutes for certain articles, such as rubber.

ABILITY OF ENEMIES TO PUT SUPERIOR FORCES IN FIELD

Referring to the discussion whether Germany's enemies would be able to bring greatly superior forces into the field, the Chancellor mentioned the fact that France already has called to the colors the class of 1917, bringing into the war youths under the usual military age.

The Chancellor referred to the charge that members of the crew of a German submarine had been shot while defenseless by the crew of the British patrol boat Baralong, and said the English press had concealed the facts of this case from the nation. As he made these remarks, the whole house arose as an expression of indignation.

Speaking of the guarantees of the position of Germany in the future, to be included in the peace terms, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg insisted that the longer the war is continued, with increasing bitterness by Germany's enemies, the greater is the need of such guarantees.

"We do not fight in order to subjugate other nations," he said. "We fight for the protection of our life and liberty. For the German government, the war has always been what it was at the beginning—a war of defense for the German nation and for her future."

"The war can be terminated only by a peace which will give the certainty that war will not return. We all agree

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about that. There lies, and there always will lie, the root of our strength."

GERMANY IN POSITION NOW TO SPEAK OF PEACE

Dr. Scheidemann's address was received with a degree of interest second only to that aroused by the Chancellor's speech. He reminded the house that at the beginning of the war the Socialists had approved the attitude of the German government. A glance at the map, he continued, would show that Germany, conscious of her strength and her successes, could now speak of peace without running the risk of being considered weak-hearted or dispirited.

Dr. Scheidemann protested against the attitude of those who dream of the annexation of much territory, and spoke with equal earnestness in denunciation of those enemies of Germany who advocate dismemberment of this country. He protested also against the crusade in foreign countries in opposition to "Prussian militarism," because this conception was wrong, and, furthermore, because it was a matter which concerned not one but the Germans themselves. The French, he said, should abandon the idea of annexing Alsace and Lorraine.

Although Germany had won enormous successes with her arms, he continued, they had been gained at the price of heavy sacrifices. In view of the present situation the question of peace was important in all countries. The difficulty lay in the fact that statesmen did not know how to begin negotiations, fearing such a step would be considered a proof of weakness.

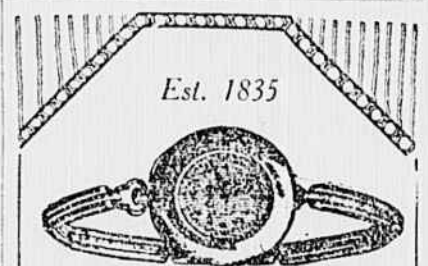
In this connection Dr. Scheidemann spoke of the statement made recently in the English House of Commons by Lord Curzon that the British government should show itself ready to accept any suggestions which would end the war. He referred to the attitude of Italian Socialists and to the utterances of Count Andrassy, former Hungarian Premier. He asserted that negotiations should be based on information, the longing for peace in France was general.

WAR BRINGING EUROPE TO VERGE OF RUIN

Dr. Scheidemann insisted that his remarks, like those of Baron Courtyer, could not be interpreted as a sign of hesitating strength, but were made in view of the fact that the war was bringing Europe to the verge of ruin. The idea that it was possible to starve Germany, he continued, should be abandoned. According to the recent census there were 25,000,000 swine and 55,000,000 kilograms of potatoes in Germany, which proved there was sufficient food for all.

The words of Emperor William, that for Germany this was no war of conquest, were recalled by the speaker. Inasmuch as Germany has defended her frontiers successfully, it was proper to ask the Chancellor for an expression in regard to conditions of peace. He declared that Germany insisted upon being treated as the equal of other nations, and repudiated the idea that German hegemony was the end in view. The present moment, he declared, might become a historic one, since possibly Germany might gain the glory of having been the first to dare to speak of peace.

Among the statements made by the Chancellor which attracted attention was that the King of Bulgaria had redeemed the promise given after the second Balkan war, in which contest



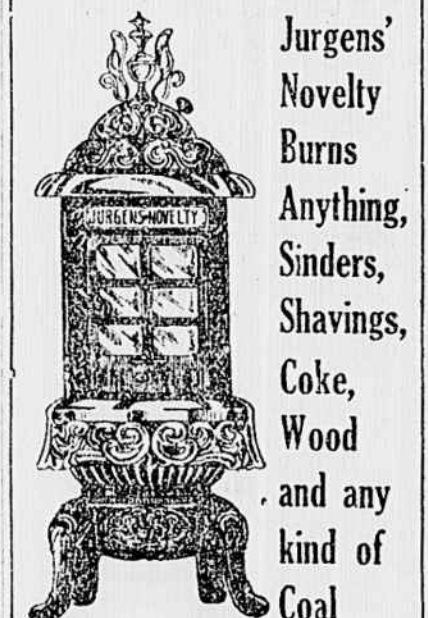
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Bulgaria had borne the brunt of the fighting, and had then been abandoned by Russia. Serbia then had received her reward from Russia because the Serbian vanguard had advanced against Austria-Hungary, the Chancellor declared, but to-day Bulgaria was floating over reconquered Bulgaria all the Serbia has been crushed, and this is one more small country which has been sacrificed for the interest of the entente allies. The Danube is now free, the Chancellor said, and the Turkish positions in the Balkan region are now stronger than before, although Mr. Asquith last summer proclaimed their imminent fall.

STRONG BRIDGE CONSTRUCTED TO SERVE CIVILIZATION

"Thanks to the far-sighted policy of King Ferdinand," he continued, "a strong bridge has been constructed uniting firmly the central powers with the Balkans and the Near East. After peace has been concluded this bridge will not be removed from the steps of marching battalions, but will serve the works of civilization and peace. The friendship now confirmed by fraternity in arms will then be strengthened by the exchange of goods among nations. The Chancellor stated that German forces held strong advanced positions in Russia, and that French and British attempts to break through the western front had failed, notwithstanding the numerical superiority of Germany's opponents there. On the Austro-Italian front he said the Austrian and Hungarian forces were holding fast and the only successes of the Italians had consisted in wanton destruction of towns which they had meant to capture.

The Chancellor then took up the administration of the conquered territories. He said the economic life of Belgium was reviving slowly. The coal mines were almost as busy as in times of peace, having produced 3,500,000 tons in the last three months. Belgium, he continued, was suffering because England was preventing it from exporting goods overseas.

"Why did not the Westminster Gazette tell this on August 4 of 1914?" the Chancellor asked. "Then the whole world would have heard the truth at the beginning of the war."

Discussing the military situation the Chancellor stated that German forces held strong advanced positions in Russia, and that French and British attempts to break through the western front had failed, notwithstanding the numerical superiority of Germany's opponents there. On the Austro-Italian front he said the Austrian and Hungarian forces were holding fast and the only successes of the Italians had consisted in wanton destruction of towns which they had meant to capture.

TASK IN RUSSIA PARTICULARLY HARD

Germany's task in the conquered portions of Russia, he said, had been particularly hard, on account of con-

ditions prevailing under Russian administration. The cities were without sewage facilities and their administration had been in the hands of the Russian bureaucracy. The Germans had established self-government in Poland, where the new form of administration was being put into effect with zeal and intelligence. Germany had constructed more than 4,000 kilometers (about 2,500 miles) of roads. The schools had been reopened and now were being taught not in Russian, but in the mother tongue of the pupils. In Warsaw the university and the Technical High School had been reopened. The Chancellor said that as late as February the Russian government had declined to introduce the Polish language in the university.

In Belgium, he continued, attendance at schools had been made compulsory. The Flemish language, formerly suppressed, was now being used. Newspapers of the entente nations, Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg continued, were full of sensational untruths about Germany, announcing in headlines:

"Germany defeated. Germany at her end. Germany begs for peace. Many other nonsensical reports have been published, such as the assertion that Emperor William was preparing for a solemn entry into Constantinople, in order to dictate terms of peace."

Assertions concerning Germany's depression and Germany's arrogance alternate in these reports, "which are entirely untrue."

This campaign, he continued, began at the moment when the diplomatic efforts of the entente in the Balkans broke down.

"After the failures," he said, "the entente powers needed something in order to divert public attention from their own miserable conditions."

The Chancellor urged the people of Germany to consider only the facts, the real situation in this country—and on the fighting front.

"Against the convincing power of these facts our enemies are helpless," he said. "There is nothing in our situation which could shake our confidence."

"If our enemies now refuse to recognize the facts, they will have to do so later."

When the Chancellor finished, the whole chamber joined in an outburst of applause.

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The association has sent out appeals for old linen, cotton and flannel, and for women to help in the sewing. The room will be open every day. Contributions may be sent to the chairman, Mrs. J. Allison Hodges, 107 East Franklin Street.

The officers of this branch of the association are as follows: Mrs. J. Allison Hodges, chairman; Mrs. E. R. Williams, vice-chairman; Mrs. Thomas F. Jeffries, treasurer, and Mrs. E. D. L. Taylor, secretary.



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